

Division(s): N/A

COUNCIL – 10 DECEMBER 2024

TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID TERM REVIEW 2024/25

Report by the Executive Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer

RECOMMENDATION

1. Council is **RECOMMENDED** to note the Council's treasury management activity in the first half of 2024/25.

Executive Summary

2. Treasury management is defined as: "The management of the organisation's borrowing, investments and cash flows, including its banking, money market and capital market transactions, the effective control of the risks associated with those activities, and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks."
3. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA's) 'Code of Practice on Treasury Management 2021' requires that committee to which some treasury management responsibilities are delegated, will receive regular monitoring reports on treasury management activities and risks. This report sets out the position at 30 September 2024.
4. Throughout this report, the performance for the first half of the year (1 April to 30 September 2024) is measured against the budget agreed by Council in February 2024.
5. As at 30 September, the council's outstanding debt totalled £279m and the average rate of interest paid on long-term debt during the year was 4.41%. No new external borrowing was arranged during the first half of the year, whilst a £5m LOBO was repaid during the first half of the year. The Council's forecast debt financing position for 2024/25 is shown in Annex 1.
6. The [Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25](#) agreed in February 2024 assumed an average base rate of 4.50%.
7. The average daily balance of temporary surplus cash invested in-house was expected to be £463m in 2024/25, with an average in-house return of 4.25%.
8. During the first half of the year the Council achieved an average in-house return of 4.95% on average cash balances of £478.542m, producing gross interest receivable of £11.876m. In relation to external funds, the return for the for six months was £1.834m, bringing total investment income to £13.709m. This compares to budgeted investment income of £9.276m, giving a net overachievement of £4.433m.
9. At 30 September 2024, the council's investment portfolio of £540.964m comprised £391.000m of fixed term deposits, £51.103m at short term notice in money market funds

and £98.861m in pooled funds with a variable net asset value. Annex 4 provides an analysis of the investment portfolio at 30 September 2024.

Treasury Management Activity

Debt Financing & Maturing Debt

10. The Strategy for Long Term Borrowing agreed in February 2024 included the option to fund new or replacement borrowing up to the value of £230m through internal borrowing. The aim was to reduce the Council's exposure to credit risk and reduce the long term cost of carry (difference between borrowing costs and investment returns).
11. The council is able to borrow from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB), through the money markets or via community municipal investments. High inflation over the last 3 years has led to bond yields, and therefore PWLB rates, remaining high. The expectation is that PWLB rates should reduce over the medium term. Given the forecast for borrowing rates, the strategy for 2024/25 assumes the majority of the increase in capital financing requirement to be met through internal borrowing. A small amount of borrowing is planned to be raised via community municipal investments to help finance net zero schemes.
12. As at 30 September 2024, the authority had 43 PWLB loans totalling £244.383m, 6 LOBO¹ loans totalling £30m and one £5m money market loan. The average rate of interest paid on PWLB debt was 4.52% and the average cost of LOBO debt in 2023/24 was 3.91%. The cost of debt on the money market loan was 3.95%. The combined weighted average for interest paid on long-term debt was 4.89%. The Council's debt portfolio as at 30 September 2023 is shown in Annex 1.
13. The Council also repaid one Lender's Option/Borrowers' Option Loan (LOBO) of £5m without penalty when the provider used their option to "call" the loan. No PLWB loans matured during the first half of the year. The weighted average interest rate payable on the matured loans was 3.8%. The forecast outturn for interest payable in 2024/2524 is £12.21m which is below the budgeted figure of £15.32m. The details are set out in Annex 2.

Investment Strategy

14. The Council holds deposits and invested funds representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves. The guidance on Local Government Investments in England gives priority to security and liquidity and the Council's aim is to achieve a yield commensurate with these principles. The Council continued to adopt a cautious approach to lending to financial institutions and continuously monitored credit quality information relating to counterparties.
15. During the first half of the financial year term fixed deposits have been placed with other Local Authorities as per the approved lending list, whilst Money Market Funds have been utilised for short-term liquidity. Inter Local Authority lending remains an attractive market to deposit funds with from a security viewpoint, whilst the Government's Debt Management Deposit Facility (DMADF) has also provided a competitive and secure counterparty from time to time.

¹ LOBO (Lender's Option/Borrower's Option) Loans are long-term loans which include a re-pricing option for the bank at predetermined intervals.

16. The Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy for 2024/25 included the use of external fund managers and pooled funds to diversify the investment portfolio through the use of different investment instruments, investment in different markets, and exposure to a range of counterparties. It is expected that these funds should outperform the Council's in-house investment performance over a rolling three-year period. The strategy permitted up to 50% of the total portfolio to be invested with external fund managers and pooled funds (excluding Money Market Funds). The performance of the pooled funds will continue to be monitored by the Treasury Management Strategy Team (TMST) throughout the year against respective benchmarks and the in-house portfolio.
17. At the start of the year the UK Bank Rate was 5.25% which was in line with the forecast. The Bank of England cut rates to 5% in August 2024, with further cuts forecast to bring base rate down to 4.25% by the end of the financial year. Longer term, base rate is expected to fall to 3.00% during 2026.

The Council's Lending List

18. In-house cash balances are deposited with institutions that meet the council's approved credit rating criteria. The approved lending list, which sets out those institutions, is updated to reflect changes in bank and building society credit ratings. Changes are reported to Cabinet as part of the Business Management & Monitoring Report. The approved lending list may also be further restricted by officers, in response to changing conditions and perceived risk. There were no changes to the lending list during the first half of 2024/25.

Investment Performance

19. Temporary surplus cash balances include: developer contributions; council reserves and balances; and various other funds to which the Council pays interest at each financial year end. The budgeted annual return on these in-house balances for 2024/25 was 4.25% and assumed an average annual in-house cash balance of £361.622m.
20. The actual average daily balance of temporary surplus cash invested in-house was £456.059m for the first half of 2024/25 and the average in-house return was 4.95%, producing gross interest receivable of £11.876m. Gross distributions from pooled funds totalling £1.834m were also realised in the first half of the year, bringing total investment income to £13.710m. This compares to budgeted investment income of £9.276m, giving a net overachievement of £4.434m. This reflects a combination of higher than forecast average cash balances, and higher than forecast interest rates.
21. Cash balances for the year are forecast to be lower than they otherwise would be as a result of negative Dedicated Schools Grant balances relating to High Needs. The cumulative negative DSG balance is forecast to be £81.90m by the end of 2024/25. Since this reflects actual cash spent by the council this means there is an estimated opportunity cost of £3.4m in unearned interest for the year. The cumulative opportunity cost of lost interest is estimated to be £6.38m by the end of 2024/25.
22. The Council operates a number of instant access call accounts and money market funds to deposit short-term cash surpluses. During the first half of 2024/25 the average balance held on instant access was £54.376m, at an average rate of 5.12%.

23. At 30 September 2024 the total value of pooled fund investments was £98.861m. This is up from the value as at 30 June 2024 of £97.442m.
24. At 30 September 2024, the council's investment portfolio of £540.964m comprised £391.000m of fixed term deposits, £51.103m at short term notice in money market funds and £98.861m in pooled funds with a variable net asset value. Annex 4 provides an analysis of the investment portfolio at 30 September 2024.
25. The Council's Treasury Management Strategy Team regularly monitors the risk profile of the Council's investment portfolio. An analysis of the credit and maturity position of the portfolio at 30 September 2024 is included at Annex 4.

Prudential Indicators for Treasury Management

26. During the financial quarter, the Council operated within the treasury limits and Prudential Indicators set out in the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25. The position as at 30 September 2024 for the Prudential Indicators is shown in Annex 3.

Financial Implications

27. This report is mostly concerned with finance and the implications are set out in the main body of the report.

Comments checked by:

Ian Dyson, Director of Financial & Commercial Services, ian.dyson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

28. The report meets the requirements of both the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities. The Council is required to comply with both Codes through Regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003. There are no other legal implications.

Comments checked by:

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Sustainability Implications

29. This report is not expected to have any negative impact with regards to the Council's zero carbon emissions commitment by 2030.

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October 2024

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL DEBT FINANCING 2023/24

<u>Debt Profile</u>		£m
1. PWLB	54%	244.38
2. Other Long Term Loans	9%	<u>40.00</u>
3. Sub-total External Debt		284.38
4. Internal Balances	37%	<u>166.54</u>
5. Actual Debt at 31 March 2024	100%	450.92
6. Prudential Borrowing		77.02
7. Borrowing in Advance		0.00
8. Minimum Revenue Provision		<u>-14.23</u>
9. Forecast Debt at 31 March 2025		513.71
<u>Maturing Debt</u>		
10. PWLB loans maturing during the year		-3.00
11. PWLB/LOBO loans repaid prematurely		<u>-10.00</u>
12. Total Maturing Debt		-13.00
<u>New External Borrowing</u>		
13. PWLB Normal		0.00
14. PWLB loans raised in the course of debt restructuring		0.00
15. Money Market LOBO loans		<u>0.00</u>
16. Total New External Borrowing		0.00
<u>Debt Profile Year End</u>		
17. PWLB	47%	241.38
18. Money Market loans (incl £25m LOBOs)	6%	<u>30.00</u>
19. Forecast Sub-total External Debt		271.38
20. Forecast Internal Balances	47%	<u>242.33</u>
21. Forecast Debt at 31 March 2025	100%	513.71

Line

- 1 – 5 This is a breakdown of the Council's debt at the beginning of the financial year (1 April 2024). The PWLB is a government agency operating within the Debt Management Office. LOBO (Lender's Option/ Borrower's Option) loans are long-term loans, with a maturity of up to 60 years, which includes a re-pricing option for the bank at predetermined time intervals. Internal balances include provisions, reserves, revenue balances, capital receipts unapplied, and excess of creditors over debtors.
- 6 'Prudential Borrowing' reflects Prudential Borrowing taken by the authority there is a robust invest to save model; or the council has a significant unmet capital need.
- 7 'Borrowing in Advance' is the amount the Council borrowed in advance to fund future capital finance costs.
- 8 The charge to revenue made in respect of paying off the principal sum of the borrowing undertaken to finance the capital programme.
- 9 The Council's forecast total debt by the end of the financial year, after taking into account new borrowing, debt repayment and movement in funding by internal balances.
- 10 The Council's normal maturing PWLB debt.
- 11 PWLB debt repaid early during the year.
- 12 Total debt repayable during the year.
- 13 The normal PWLB borrowing undertaken by the Council during 2024/25.
- 14 New PWLB loans to replace debt repaid early.
- 15 The Money Market borrowing undertaken by the Council during 2024/25
- 16 The total external borrowing undertaken.
- 18-22 The Council's forecast debt profile at the end of the year.

Long-Term Debt Maturing 2024/25**Public Works Loan Board: Loans maturing during 2024/25**

Date	Amount £m	Rate %
22/11/2024	3.000	4.250%
Total	3.000	

LOBO Loans called & repaid during 2024/25

Date	Amount £m	Rate %
31/07/2024	5.000	3.800%
02/10/2024	5.000	4.010%
Total	10.000	

Prudential Indicators Monitoring at 30 September 2024

The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Authority to have regard to CIPFA's Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Prudential Code) when determining how much money it can afford to borrow. To demonstrate that the Authority has fulfilled the requirements of the Prudential Code the following indicators must be set and monitored each year.

Authorised and Operational Limit for External Debt

Actual debt levels are monitored against the Operational Boundary and Authorised Limit for External Debt below. The Operational Boundary is based on the Authority's estimate of most likely, i.e. prudent, but not worst case scenario for external debt. The council confirms that the Operational Boundary has not been breached during the first quarter of 2024/25.

The Authorised Limit is the affordable borrowing limit determined in compliance with the Local Government Act 2003. It is the maximum debt that the Authority can legally owe. The authorised limit provides headroom over and above the operational boundary for unusual cash movements. The Authority confirms that the Authorised limit was not breached in the first quarter of 2024/25.

Authorised limit for External Debt	£570,000,000
Operational Limit for External Debt	£555,000,000
Capital Financing Requirement for year	£513,527,972

	Actual	Forecast
	30/09/2024	31/03/2025
Borrowing	£279,382,618	£271,382,618
Other Long-Term Liabilities	£ 836,000	£ 836,000
Total	£280,218,618	£272,218,618

Interest Rate Exposures

These indicators are set to control the Authority's exposure to interest rate risk. The upper limits on fixed and variable rate interest exposures. Fixed rate investments are borrowings are those where the rate of interest is fixed for the whole financial year. Instruments that mature during the financial year are classed as variable rate.

Fixed Interest Rate Exposure

Fixed Interest Net Borrowing limit	£350,000,000
Actual at 30 September 2024	-£142,617,382

Variable Interest Rate Exposure

Variable Interest Net Borrowing limit	£0
Actual at 30 September 2024	-£119,127,560

Principal Sums Invested over 365 days

Total sums invested for more than 364 days limit	£215,000,000
Actual sums invested for more than 364 days	£ 30,000,000

Maturity Structure of Borrowing

This indicator is set to control the Authority's exposure to refinancing risk. The upper and lower limits on the maturity structure of fixed rate borrowing and the actual structure at 30 September 2024, are shown below. Time periods start on the first day of each financial year. The maturity date of borrowing is the earliest date on which the lender can demand repayment.

	Limit %	Actual %
Under 12 months	0 – 20	3.58
12 – 24 months	0 – 25	5.01
24 months – 5 years	0 – 35	17.90
5 years to 10 years	5 – 40	30.92
10 years +	25 – 95	42.59

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO 30/09/2023

Fixed term deposits held at 30/09/2024

Counterparty	Principal Deposited	Maturity Date
Falkirk Council	£5,000,000.00	01/10/2024
Great Yarmouth Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	08/10/2024
Orkney Islands Council	£3,000,000.00	10/10/2024
The Highland Council	£5,000,000.00	16/10/2024
London Borough of Haringey Council	£5,000,000.00	18/10/2024
West Dunbartonshire Council	£5,000,000.00	23/10/2024
Fife Council	£5,000,000.00	24/10/2024
Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire	£5,000,000.00	28/10/2024
Fife Council	£5,000,000.00	31/10/2024
Worthing Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	19/11/2024
Aberdeen City Council	£5,000,000.00	19/11/2024
Aberdeen City Council	£8,000,000.00	19/11/2024
Aberdeen City Council	£5,000,000.00	20/11/2024
Blackpool Council	£7,000,000.00	22/11/2024
Cambridgeshire County Council	£5,000,000.00	22/11/2024
Cheshire East Council	£5,000,000.00	22/11/2024
Moray Council	£5,000,000.00	26/11/2024
Surrey County Council	£5,000,000.00	02/12/2024
Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside	£5,000,000.00	11/12/2024
London Borough of Newham Council	£5,000,000.00	23/12/2024
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	27/12/2024
Falkirk Council	£5,000,000.00	03/01/2025
Aberdeen City Council	£5,000,000.00	03/01/2025
Conwy County Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	03/01/2025
Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire	£5,000,000.00	06/01/2025
Surrey County Council	£3,000,000.00	07/01/2025
South Ayrshire Council	£5,000,000.00	08/01/2025
Surrey County Council	£5,000,000.00	23/01/2025
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	24/01/2025
Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside	£5,000,000.00	24/01/2025
Surrey County Council	£5,000,000.00	27/01/2025
East Dunbartonshire Council	£5,000,000.00	29/01/2025
Falkirk Council	£5,000,000.00	31/01/2025
London Borough of Waltham Forest Council	£5,000,000.00	31/01/2025
West Dunbartonshire Council	£5,000,000.00	06/02/2025
Fife Council	£5,000,000.00	14/02/2025
Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	14/02/2025
Monmouthshire County Council	£5,000,000.00	17/02/2025
Somerset Council	£5,000,000.00	17/02/2025
Fife Council	£5,000,000.00	18/02/2025

Money Market Funds

Counterparty	Balance at 30/09/24 (£)	Notice period
Aberdeen Liquidity Fund	18,000,000.00	Same day
Goldman Sachs Sterling Liquid Fund	0.00	Same day
Deutsche Sterling Liquid Fund	0.00	Same day
Federated Sterling Liquidity Funds	23,216,121.91	Same day
Legal & General Sterling Liquidity Fund	9,869,864.66	Same day
CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund	628.61	Same day
J P Morgan Sterling Liquidity Fund	4,684.23	Same day
Morgan Stanley Sterling Liquid Fund	0.00	Same day
Total	51,091,299.41	

Notice / Call Accounts

Counterparty	Balance at 30/09/24 (£)	Notice period
Santander Call Account	27.75	Same day
Barclays Current	9,169.56	Same day
Handlesbanken	2,389.13	Same day
Total	9,435.44	

Strategic Bond Funds

Fund	Balance at 30/09/24 (£)	Notice period
Threadneedle strategic bond fund (income)	12,570,238.08	4 days
Threadneedle Global Equity Income Fund	17,035,972.74	4 days
Kames Diversified Income	9,632,489.77	4 days
Ninety One Diversified Income	9,077,726.35	4 days
M&G Strategic Corporate Bond Fund	11,383,112.89	4 days
Schroder Income Maximiser	11,431,596.17	4 days
CCLA Diversified Income Fund	4,919,057.72	4 days
Total	76,050,193.71	

Property Funds

Fund	Balance at 30/09/24 (£)	Notice period
CCLA Local Authorities Property Fund	22,810,481.27	Monthly
Total	22,810,481.27	